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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An optical element of the present invention is constituted by a multilayer structure having a polarizing plate, and a light diffusing plate. The light diffusing plate is formed of a birefringent film containing dispersed therein minute regions differing from the birefringent film in birefringent characteristics. The minute regions are formed of a thermoplastic liquid-crystal polymer. The difference in refractive index between the birefringent film and the minute regions in a direction perpendicular to the axis direction in which a linearly polarized light has a maximum transmittance, Δn^1 , is 0.03 or larger and that in said axis direction, Δn^2 , is not larger than 80% of the Δn^1 . Furthermore, the Δn^1 direction for the light diffusing plate is parallel to the transmission axis of the polarizing plate. A liquid-crystal display of the present invention has a liquid-crystal cell and the optical element disposed on one or each side of the cell.